



HOUSE OF LORDS

Constitution Committee inquiry: The Legislative Process

Call for Evidence on the passage of legislation through Parliament

The Constitution Committee is conducting a large-scale inquiry into the legislative process. This follows its major 2004 report on *Parliament and the Legislative Process*.¹ The Committee is interested in how bills are prepared by Government and scrutinised in Parliament; whether and how outside organisations and the public are involved in the process; and how the legislative process is, or could be, affected by new technology and by the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The inquiry began in October 2016 and will continue in this parliamentary session. It is split into four distinct parts:

1. Preparing legislation for introduction in Parliament;
2. The passage of legislation through Parliament;
3. The delegation of powers; and
4. The period after Royal Assent.

The Committee published its report on stage 1, preparing legislation for Parliament, in October 2017.² The Committee took evidence on stage 3, the delegation of powers, between October 2016 and February 2017 and will report on it in the coming months.

The Committee is now seeking evidence on stage 2 of its inquiry: the passage of legislation through Parliament. The Committee is focusing on Parliament's scrutiny of bills and the use of parliamentary time for legislation. It will examine how bills are considered at each stage of the process, the use of parliamentary time for legislative scrutiny, and the quality of the explanatory materials that accompany bills. The inquiry will also explore the extent to which the public and stakeholders can get involved in the legislative process and the scope for new technologies to improve the scrutiny of legislation.

The Committee welcomes written submissions on any aspect of this topic, and particularly on the issues and questions set out below. Submissions need not address all the questions. We welcome contributions from all interested individuals and organisations. Written evidence should be submitted online via the Committee's website, <http://www.parliament.uk/legislative-process-written-submission-form>. The deadline for submissions is 5pm on Monday 16 April 2018.

Questions:

Parliamentary scrutiny processes

¹ Constitution Committee, [Parliament and the Legislative Process](#) (14th Report of Session 2003–04, HL Paper 173)

² Constitution Committee, [The Legislative Process: Preparing Legislation for Parliament](#) (4th Report of Session 2017–19, HL Paper 27)

- How effectively does Parliament scrutinise bills at the various stages of the legislative process, in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords?
- To what extent does each House have a separate role in the legislative process? How well understood are these roles?
- What has been the impact of changes to the legislative process since 2004, such as the introduction in the House of Commons of public bill committees and the 'English votes for English laws' procedures?
- Should there be greater select committee involvement in legislative scrutiny?
- To what extent does the UK's withdrawal from the European Union pose challenges for Parliament's scrutiny of bills?

Timetabling of legislative scrutiny

- Does the legislative process appropriately balance time spent considering bills in the Chamber of each House with time in public bill committee/Grand Committee?
- Does the arrangement and timetabling of legislative business work effectively?
- What is the impact on the legislative process of having annual sessions of Parliament? What difference does a two-year session, such as 2010–12 and 2017–19, make?

Explanatory materials

- How useful are the explanatory materials accompanying bills for parliamentarians and the public? What could be done to improve the accessibility and understanding of legislation?
- How effective is Parliament's scrutiny of impact assessments and other Government documents accompanying legislation?

Public engagement

- To what extent, and how effectively, are the public and stakeholders involved in the scrutiny of legislation as it passes through Parliament?
- To what extent does stakeholder involvement prior to the introduction of a bill have an impact during the legislative process?
- What could be done to increase or improve engagement with the public and stakeholders?

Technology

- How might Parliament's website be improved to communicate the workings of the legislative process more effectively? Are there opportunities to display more clearly the way bills change through the process and the impact of proposed amendments at each stage?
- How can new technologies enhance the quality of bill scrutiny and understanding of the legislative process?

ANNEX: GUIDANCE FOR SUBMISSIONS

Written evidence must be submitted online via the committee's inquiry page <http://www.parliament.uk/legislative-process-written-submission-form>. Please do not submit PDFs (if you do not have access to Microsoft Word you may submit in another editable electronic form). If you cannot submit evidence online, please contact the committee staff.

The deadline for written evidence is 5pm on Monday 16 April 2018.

Concise submissions are preferred. A submission longer than six pages should include a one-page summary. Paragraphs should be numbered. Submissions should be dated, with a note of the author's name, and of whether the author is making the submission on an individual or a corporate basis. All submissions submitted online will be acknowledged automatically.

Personal contact details supplied to the committee will be removed from submissions before publication but will be retained by the committee staff for specific purposes relating to the committee's work, such as seeking additional information.

Submissions become the property of the committee which will decide whether to accept them as evidence. Evidence may be published by the committee at any stage. It will appear on the committee's website and be deposited in the Parliamentary Archives. Once you have received acknowledgement that your submission has been accepted as evidence you may publicise or publish it yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the committee. If you publish your evidence separately you should be aware that you will be legally responsible for its content.

You should not comment on individual cases currently before a court of law, or matters in respect of which court proceedings are imminent. If you anticipate such issues arising, you should discuss with the clerk of the committee how this might affect your submission.

Certain individuals and organisations may be invited to appear in person before the committee to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster and broadcast in audio and online. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Substantive communications to the committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the clerk or the chairman of the committee, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the committee.

This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy directly.

You may follow the progress of the inquiry at <http://www.parliament.uk/legislative-process-inquiry>.

To contact the staff of the committee, please email constitution@parliament.uk.